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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget on its thirty-first session

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
from 4 to 8 May 1998

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INTRODUCTION

1. The thirty-first session of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 4 to 8 May 1997. In the course of the session, the Working Party held 3 plenary meetings - the 124th to 126th meetings. All other meetings were informal and held in private.

Chapter I

SAVINGS RESULTING FROM THE IMPROVED OVERALL COST-EFFECTIVENESS ACHIEVED PURSUANT TO THE NINTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE

(Agenda item 3)

2. For its consideration of this item, the Working Party had before it the following documentation:

> "Analysis of savings resulting from the improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the Conference, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat, as requested by General Assembly resolution 52/220 of 27 December 1997, and proposals pursuant to General Assembly decision 52/462 of 28 March 1998: report of the Secretary-General" (UNCTAD/ISS/Misc.121).

3. The **Chairman** said that the general terms of reference of the Working Party were set out in paragraphs 103 and 107 (a) of "A Partnership for Growth and Development", whereby it was to identify the amount of programme savings UNCTAD had generated through its streamlined intergovernmental machinery and more focused programme of work and explore ways of reallocating a part of the savings resulting from improved overall cost effectiveness with a view to strengthening UNCTAD's capabilities, including technical cooperation. More specific terms of reference were set out in General Assembly resolution 52/220, paragraphs 52 and 54, and Trade and Development Board decision 448 (EX-16), whereby the Working Party was to discuss proposals for the reallocation of resources, as presented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in document UNCTAD/ISS/Misc.121.

4. The **Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD** and the **Chief of the UNCTAD Administrative Service** introduced the report of the Secretary-General.

5. The spokesperson for the **African Group** (South Africa) recalled the strong will expressed by member States in paragraphs 103 and 107 of "A Partnership for Growth and Development" to translate reforms and administrative savings into spending on substantive programmes, as well as the clear language used by the General Assembly in resolution 51/167 in support of this aim. The African Group noted with disappointment that, despite the explanations proffered by the secretariat, neither of these instructions had been substantively met. The Group shared the frustration expressed by the General Assembly in resolution 52/220 in this connection and suggested that the Working Party also formally register its displeasure at the way the issue of savings had been dealt with. The Group was now left with an academic exercise without any proposals for reallocation of savings, and had it not been for the Fifth Committee, there would have been no hope of any actual strengthening of substantive programmes.

6. Concerning part I of the report of the Secretary-General, no monetary value was accorded to the reduction of meeting units. The Group strongly urged the Working Party to convey in the clearest possible terms to the General Assembly the fact that UNCTAD had reduced its demands on common services by an amount of at least $2 million, which represented a politically significant signal of reform. The Group noted the amount of $1,880,000 redirected to substantive work in the programme budget.

7. With regard to part II, the Group agreed on areas such as financing of experts, finance for development, the positive agenda and future multilateral trade negotiations, and LDCs. However, it noted the almost extravagant use of consultants and general temporary assistance. Given the fact that so many staff members apparently required retraining, should some money not have gone to an expanded and accelerated programme of training and skills development for UNCTAD staff? It would also have been advisable to strengthen UNCTAD's information technology capabilities. Finally, the African Group considered that the evaluation of programmes of technical cooperation should be accelerated and that additional funding could go to debt management.

8. The spokesperson for the **Latin American and Caribbean Group** (Brazil) said that the decision of the General Assembly represented recognition of the important efforts made by UNCTAD to restructure its intergovernmental machinery and to reform its secretariat after UNCTAD IX, and her Group expressed its appreciation for a timely decision that provided a unique opportunity to revitalize the organization, particularly in the field of technical cooperation and development activities. It regretted that the Secretary-General's report did not present a detailed account of savings resulting from UNCTAD's restructuring of its intergovernmental machinery and the reform of its secretariat, and it considered that savings had not been properly identified.

9. Regarding reductions in conference servicing requirements, it would have been useful to examine the impact of the reduction in meetings in comparison with other agencies in the United Nations system. It was not acceptable to see other users of UNOG conference services benefiting from UNCTAD's efforts to streamline its machinery and simply to agree that UNCTAD had cut conference requirements without deriving any benefits.

10. Concerning part II of the report, her Group commended the proposal for financing of experts. It supported the position that the regular budget should finance the participation of experts from developing countries in UNCTAD meetings. Active participation in these meetings was the only way experts could make their personal contributions and share their countries' experiences so as to enrich the outcome of expert meetings with the points of view of developing countries.

11. Her Group attached great importance to the suggestions relating to preparations for UNCTAD X. The proposals to develop an agenda for future trade negotiations were welcome, as were those aimed at enhancing subprogramme 2. An important and essential cross-cutting issue such as LDCs should also receive special attention in the allocation of extra financing.

12. On the other hand, the US$ 3.5 million allocated to consultants and temporary assistance seemed a very high amount considering that only US$ 1.7 million had been proposed for the financing of experts, regional seminars and other similar activities. Her Group suggested that staff skills be examined and that recruitment of consultants and temporary assistance should take regional geographic balance into account.

13. The representative of **Morocco** said that there was an imbalance in the distribution of resources, with too little being allocated to investment issues and LDCs. Regarding Subprogramme 2, he would have liked to see more concrete measures and activities proposed, and the same applied in the case of Subprogramme 5. With regard to the latter, he was not sure that it was worth investing in an evaluation of the Programme of Action, and UNCTAD could perhaps concentrate on the implementation of concrete measures recommended by the High-level Meeting on LDCs' Trade Development. It was also regretted that no

activities in support of highly indebted countries had been proposed. His country supported the proposals for financing of experts, as well as for funds for evaluation of technical cooperation activities. It also agreed to reinforce TRAINFORTRADE, which was an essential programme for African countries. Concerning UNCTAD X, clarification should be given with regard to the preparations foreseen. Finally, he regretted the absence of any mention of the Palestinian programme, to which some priority should have been given.

14. The representative of **China**, expressing support for South Africa, Morocco and Brazil, said that China attached great importance to the utilization of savings by UNCTAD. It was of the view that resources should be devoted to those areas of UNCTAD's activities where there was the greatest need, and savings should not, therefore, be divided proportionally among subprogrammes. The member States should decide on the distribution of resources, and the Secretary-General's report should be regarded as a draft to be revised by the Working Party before being sent back to the Secretary-General. While China felt that it was being proposed to make excessive use of consultants and GTA, it supported allocations for financing of experts, preparations for UNCTAD X, a positive agenda for trade negotiations, LDCs and technical cooperation.

15. The representative of **Norway** expressed dissatisfaction with the way the preparations for the session of the Working Party had been handled. Regarding the Secretary-General's report, he would have liked to see stronger focus on fewer objectives. Concerning funds allocated to consultants/experts, he expressed doubt as to the need to spend so much on outside expertise, as there was a high level of expertise in the secretariat. He also had difficulties with the proposals on financing of experts, as well with the way the preparations for UNCTAD X were envisaged. On the other hand, there were several positive recommendations, especially on future trade negotiations. Finally, he would like to see a larger share of resources allocated to LDCs.

16. The representative of **Pakistan** said it appeared that the $5.5 million referred to in part II of the Secretary-General's report were not `savings', but a windfall or acknowledgment by the Fifth Committee of the efforts of UNCTAD to reform. The issue of savings therefore still needed to be addressed at some point. In that connection, he was not prepared to accept the explanation that the savings had disappeared in UNOG or through United Nations accounting procedures. It was unfair that savings benefited other organizations on which there had been no pressure to reorganize. A general expression of the concern of the Working Party should be addressed to the General Assembly.

17. On the other hand, it would be useful if member States indicated their priorities. He was happy to see that financing of experts was part of the proposal, and also that funding was being proposed to build expertise for a positive agenda on future trade negotiations and to prepare for UNCTAD X. His view was that strengthening of analytical capacity came first, and enhancing technical cooperation capacities second. He shared the view of Norway that there should be tighter focus and more imaginative proposals. The undue emphasis on consultants was a matter of concern.

18. The representative of **Chile** said that, following decisions adopted by the Fifth Committee, this was the first time that the theme of savings had been officially considered since Midrand. Unfortunately, the documentation provided by the secretariat did not reflect paragraph 114 of "A Partnership for Growth and Development" on the question of financing of experts. However, he was generally satisfied with the proposals for the allocation of $5.5 million. The comments or conclusions of the Working Party should be presented as an annex to the Secretary-General's report, unless a consensus was reached.

19. Regarding specific proposals, he found it extremely positive that financing of experts had been included, since this would increase the technical level of the meetings. However, only developing countries' experts should be financed, otherwise the proposed allocation would have to be increased to cover the cost of a higher number of experts. He was concerned by the fact that only $1.7 million had been proposed for financing of experts and seminars, as compared to $3.5 million for consultants.

20. The representative of **Switzerland** said he strongly deplored the fact that the session had been delayed and expressed serious doubts that proper procedures had been respected. With reference to preparations for UNCTAD X, this was an issue which should have been discussed with all UNCTAD members, and not Working Party members alone, before any proposal went to the General Assembly.

21. The representative of **Senegal** noted with satisfaction the importance given to the programme on Trade Points in the proposals. That programme was strategically important if the aim was to achieve the integration of developing countries into the world economy. It would also be important for technical cooperation activities to be oriented towards countries with structurally weak economies. Finally, he expressed concern about the amount proposed for consultants.

22. The representative of **France** regretted that no informal exchange of views had taken place before the Secretary-General's report had been presented to the Working Party. With regard to the proposals, it would be best if they centred round a maximum of three or four priority areas. Greater emphasis should be given to operational activities, less should be spent on consultancy services, and proposals should not be aimed at merely complementing activities funded under the 1998-1999 regular programme budget. Finally, he preferred the term "reallocation" to the term "savings"; the identification of "savings" was a question that pertained to the past, even if it had not been addressed properly, and the Working Party should now concentrate on the reallocation of the $5.5 million in question.

23. The representative of **Canada** said that her country's first concern was to ensure an action-oriented work programme based primarily on capacity-building and technical cooperation and focused on promoting the integration of developing countries into the international economy. Her delegation believed that UNCTAD was sufficiently engaged in theoretical work and therefore did not support the use of budgetary surpluses, or the recruitment of additional consultants or experts, for this purpose. Funds should rather be used specifically to assist LDCs through activities that would deliver tangible results.

24. The representative of the **United Kingdom** agreed with Pakistan and South Africa on the question of the identification of savings. After the reforms decided upon at UNCTAD IX, the United Kingdom had expected discussions about savings resulting from the efforts made, but this had not happened. The concerns of the Working Party in this respect should be made very clear to the General Assembly. Concerning the Secretary-General's report, his delegation hoped that the Secretary-General would modify the report in the light of the Working Party's discussions, and not merely annex comments. It also hoped that the Working Party's views would be taken properly into consideration. His delegation was disappointed by the fact that the proposed allocations were spread too thinly over all sub-programmes to make an impact. Priorities should have been identified, and the Working Party should concentrate on a limited number of activities.

25. The representative of **Bangladesh** emphasized that high priority should be given to LDCs. There was not such a great need for additional consultant work, and resources should be redistributed to other meaningful activities designed to support real capacity-building in LDCs. He would strongly support the activities proposed to build capacity for a positive agenda for future trade negotiations, as well as the financing of developing countries and LDCs' experts in UNCTAD meetings.

26. The representative of **Austria** said that the Secretary-General's report provided a good basis for discussions and that many valid suggestions were made but that a more focused approach should have been taken. The first thing to do was not to discuss figures but to identify priorities, and top priority should be given to activities having a positive impact on LDCs.

27. The representative of **Uganda** took note of the proposals, though deploring the fact that there had been no prior informal consultations to agree on priorities. The report was to be seen as a starting point, and the Working Party was free to state its views. In that connection, he noted the fact that what was being discussed was a windfall, not savings. With regard to proposals to recruit consultants, it was not clear to what extent this was a consequence of the abolition of regular budget posts and to what extent it reflected a genuine need for outside expertise. As regards specific proposals, he agreed with the focus on financing of experts and on LDCs.

28. The representative of **Sweden** said that the Working Party should have been more closely involved in the preparation of the report. His delegation agreed that the funds were spread too thinly over many activities, and it would like to see a few areas prioritized. Priority should be given to LDCs and more generally to initiatives that directly benefited development. The proposal to devote funds to programme evaluation also deserved support. However, he had doubts as to the use of so much money for consultants and for activities which should be financed from regular funds.

29. The representative of **Ethiopia** agreed that priority should be given to advancing the cause of the LDCs, but the amount proposed in paragraph 29 of the Secretary-General's report was not commensurate with UNCTAD's responsibilities in this field. It was also to be regretted that the amount proposed was to be spent on consultants and experts. In this connection, his delegation was under the impression that all activities relating to the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs were to be financed under the regular budget of the United Nations or from extrabudgetary sources. He expressed dissatisfaction over the fact that, in the Secretary-General's proposals, not enough funds were to be allocated to the follow-up to the High-level Meeting on Integrated Initiatives for LDCs' Trade Development. Finally, table 1 in the report was confusing, and further information on levels of actual expenditure should have been provided by the secretariat.

30. The representative of **Japan** said that the issue of savings should be dealt with hand-in-hand with the mid-term review. With regard to the allocation of savings, priority should be given to technical cooperation projects, especially those concerned with Africa and LDCs, for example the ITC/UNCTAD/WTO joint African programme. Concerning overdependence on consultants, it would be wiser to focus more on the training of UNCTAD staff, and a part of the savings could perhaps be used for this purpose. Finally, procedures for reinvestment within the United Nations system should be clarified.

31. The representative of **Madagascar** said that his delegation supported the financing of experts from LDCs to attend UNCTAD meetings. It also supported the

proposals under subprogrammes 3 and 4, which had always suffered from a lack of resources. However, the report did not seem to reflect the strong priority that "A Partnership for Growth and Development" gave to technical cooperation for LDCs, and the proposed allocations for technical cooperation should be revised upwards. There was also an imbalance between resources allocated to some priority areas and those allocated to other areas which were less important and could be financed under the regular budget. Finally, his delegation attached importance to technical cooperation in the area of debt management, and some priority should be given to that.

32. The representative of the **United States of America** expressed deep dissatisfaction with the way in which the session of the Working Party had been organized. Regarding the Secretary-General's proposals, there was excessive use of consultants, and too many of the consultants hired were former UNCTAD staff members; it was hoped that, in the future, the secretariat would reach out for new blood. On subprogramme 1, her delegation was very uncomfortable with the proposal to allocate such a large amount to an area with no director. Regarding the financing of experts to attend UNCTAD meetings, the LDCs should be the first to benefit from any such funding. Her delegation's general priorities centred around a positive agenda for future trade negotiations, technical cooperation advisory services, and strong funding for the followup to the High-level Meeting on LDCs' Trade Development. Finally, the secretariat should make proposals to consolidate or scrap programmes and introduce cost-recovery methods. These were key tasks of the mid-term review, but they should also be taken into consideration by the Working Party.

33. The representative of **Luxembourg** drew attention to the fact that, with the medium-term review going on and the approach of UNCTAD X, there was a need for a global view of what UNCTAD could or should achieve. It was important to ensure results that satisfied all delegations.

34. The representative of the **Russian Federation** said that if consensus was reached, changes should be incorporated into the Secretary-General's report and not submitted as an annex. His delegation was concerned by the amount allocated to consultants as a countermeasure to staff reductions. While the effort to channel funds to all subprogrammes was appreciated, they should in fact be channelled into fewer but more crucial areas with a real potential for results. Priority should be given to LDCs.

35. The representative of **Kenya** noted that 60 per cent of the $5.5 million was allocated to temporary assistance and consultants, and it must be asked whether the desire for more consultants and temporary staff was a result of the downsizing of the UNCTAD secretariat. In that connection, he requested additional information about the mechanism in place to enable UNCTAD to obtain consultants and temporary assistance. In the long run, it was more useful to have the necessary skills available in house.

36. The representative of **Turkey** said that information should be supplied on the participants in expert meetings since UNCTAD IX and on what travel and per diem costs had been paid from the regular budget in order to enable the Working Party to make a better judgement as to which countries needed assistance and what prevented them from participating in meetings. Information should also be provided on panellists/resource persons/experts.

37. The representative of **Chile** said that care must be taken in ensuring the accuracy of information on participants in expert meetings.

38. The **Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD** said that the postponement of the Working Party's session had been carried out in accordance with existing rules, which dated back to 1987. With regard to the background to the Secretary-General's report, imprecision in language had led to different interpretations and delays. Paragraph 103 of "A Partnership for Growth and Development" was not ambiguous, but the budget reductions decided on in August 1996 by the General Assembly and the subsequent erroneous use of the term "reallocation" had caused confusion, since the savings of UNCTAD had been turned into reductions and reallocation was not possible. The view of the Secretary-General of the United Nations was that it was not possible to determine what savings had been achieved by UNCTAD as a result of UNCTAD IX.

39. On the question of criteria, the proposed distribution of the additional resources was not based on an arithmetical allocation according to the existing relative weights of subprogrammes in the budget. The secretariat had considered a basic element of the General Assembly resolution, i.e. the request that resources be used to strengthen the capacities of UNCTAD, and had applied it to three actors: firstly, the secretariat, secondly, the intergovernmental machinery, and thirdly, through technical cooperation, member Governments. The self-contained nature of the proposals made was reflected in the fact that all related to activities which had a certain deadline, but these were exactly the type of activities which called for the use of consultants and general temporary assistance. In that connection, it should be noted that a consultant on average cost US$ 10,000 a month, while a staff member at the L5/L6 level on average cost US$ 15-16,000 per month. The United Nations benefited a great deal from the use of consultants, but if the Working Party felt that this was not the right approach, it should make its own suggestions. The request for a senior financial economist found its rationale in the fact that it related to a self-contained activity designed to address the needs of the General Assembly.

40. The report before the Working Party was a draft, and, in accordance with the legal opinion of the Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Secretary-General of the United Nations would endeavour to incorporate as many of the comments of the Working Party as possible into the document or bring them to the attention of the General Assembly. However, the best way for the Working Party to influence the situation was to produce a clear, solid, consensual set of proposals.

41. The representative of **South Africa** said it was unlikely that the Fifth Committee had made such an obvious mistake in the wording of its resolution. There was in fact a fundamental political objective which member States wished to achieve but which the secretariat did not fully comprehend. The member States were trying to do one thing, but the secretariat, by following the rules, had frustrated them in their efforts. With regard to conference servicing, UNCTAD had actually saved $2 million, and questions should therefore be asked about the other users of conference services in Geneva. The issue of finance for development represented a new mandate from the General Assembly, and additional funds were therefore required in that connection. The positive agenda for future trade negotiations had been under discussion for some time, and it was not clear why UNCTAD had not developed a capacity to address it.

42. The representative of **Morocco** said that all subprogrammes had priority, as they all appeared in "A Partnership for Growth and Development". However, this balance was not reflected in the proposals before the Working Party, particularly those relating to subprogramme 2. The latter should be strengthened, as it had always suffered from a lack of funding, unless the secretariat gave an assurance that it had sufficient resources under the regular budget.

43. The representative of **India** said that it was not easy to identify savings in a period of cuts, and the role of the Working Party was very unclear in that respect. That role should be looked into to ensure there was no duplication with the roles of ACABQ and the Fifth Committee. The Secretary-General's report contained elements of interest, and the Indian delegation had no difficulty in supporting it. On the question of prioritization, the next round of prioritization could only be at UNCTAD X. With regard to the question of attendance at expert meetings, countries often refrained from sending experts because the meetings were not substantive enough.

44. The representative of **Chile** said that amendments should be made to the Secretary-General's report only if consensus was reached.

45. The representative of **Uganda** said it was essential for the Working Party to agree on the activities which would benefit from additional funding.

46. The representative of **China** said that, if, according to the secretariat, the term "savings" was wrongly used, it should not have appeared in the titles of both item 3 of the agenda and the Secretary-General's report.

Action by the Working Party

47. At its 126th plenary meeting, on 8 May 1998, the Working Party adopted the outcome of its work on agenda item 3. In so doing, it adopted an agreed statement by the Chairman, authorized the Chairman to summarize its comments on the Secretary-General's proposals and decided to include the Chairman's summary in its report. (For the outcome, including the agreed statement by the Chairman, see annex I. For the Chairman's summary, see annex II).

48. The **Chairman** informed the Working Party that he would communicate the outcome of the Working Party's deliberations to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in accordance with General Assembly decision 52/462.

Closing statements

49. The representative of **Germany** said that Germany had participated in the Working Party's informal meetings as an observer and had pointed out during those meetings that it strictly refused the use of savings for the financing of expert travel costs in general.

50. The representative of **Japan** said his delegation regretted that the proposals it had tabled during the Working Party's discussions, in particular on the ITC/UNCTAD/WTO joint Africa programme, had not received the consideration expected.

51. The spokesperson for the **Latin American and Caribbean Group** (Brazil) welcomed the outcome of the Working Party's deliberations and expressed the hope that full agreement would be reached on all the issues to be discussed in the coming weeks.

Chapter II

UNCTAD's PUBLICATION POLICY

(Agenda item 4)

52. For its consideration of this item, the Working Party had before it the following documentation:

"Report on documentation and publications" (TD/B/EX(15)/5);

"Progress report on the implementation of UNCTAD's publication policy" (TD/B/EX(16)/3 and Add.1);

"Survey of UNCTAD documentation and publications issued in 1997" (UNCTAD/EDM/Misc.51).

53. The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD recalled the recent initiatives taken by the secretariat aimed at increasing transparency and making possible an in-depth scrutiny of publications policy. These initiatives were in addition to the rigorous regular scrutiny mechanisms already in place, whereby UNCTAD's programme budget, which contained a high level of detail concerning publications, was discussed with member States both at the drafting stage and when it was formally presented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, at which time the Working Party - the only specialized review body in the United Nations to have this opportunity - transmitted its comments directly to the General Assembly's review bodies in New York. UNCTAD also had an assessment system, which covered publications and which in fact exceeded United Nations guidelines. The combination of the regular budget process, the assessment process and the specific initiatives mentioned above meant that consideration of the publications programme of UNCTAD had achieved a degree of transparency and consultation which was unparalleled in the United Nations and was comparable to, and in some cases surpassed, national government practices.

54. Turning to points raised by member States in previous discussions on publications policy, he welcomed the favourable comments made on the broad thrust of UNCTAD's publications policy and on the internal mechanisms and procedures which had been put into place to implement the policy. He noted the wide recognition that publications played a determining role in the fulfilment of UNCTAD's mandate. The secretariat had taken note of concerns expressed regarding such aspects as the timeliness of publications, the availability of language versions, and greater use of co-publication and of new technology, and it would endeavour to address them within available resources. He also addressed concerns expressed about the format, response rate, and conclusions to be drawn from the ex-ante survey of proposed 1998-1999 publications and the ex-post survey of publications issued in 1997.

55. The secretariat's suggested modality for the future conduct of the scrutiny exercise was entirely in line with the guidelines on the efficiency and functioning of UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery adopted by the Board at its sixteenth executive session, which recommended that the work of the Working Party "should be coordinated and synchronized with the work of the relevant bodies in New York in order to ensure that the views of the Working Party are taken fully into account". In August 1998, UNCTAD programme managers would be drawing up tentative work plans, including proposed publications, for the 2000-2001 biennium. A final draft list of publications, endorsed by UNCTAD's Secretary-

General, would be submitted to member States in the form of a survey. The Working Party would then review the draft work programme at the start of 1999 and be guided by the outcomes of the above-mentioned survey, an ex-post survey of 1998 publications, and feedback from in-depth targeted readership surveys of selected publications. In addition, in order to provide member States with more specific information on the proposed publications for 1999, the secretariat would be prepared to organize informal briefings by the managers of UNCTAD's five subprogrammes. UNCTAD would then finalize its programme budget submission to New York, taking into account the views of the Working Party. The latter would subsequently review the proposed programme budget for 2000-2001 covering UNCTAD and transmit its views directly to the General Assembly's review bodies in New York.

56. In closing, he expressed his conviction that this transparent, multilayered process of review and scrutiny by intergovernmental bodies in Geneva and New York met the legitimate concerns of member States. At the same time, it was consistent with a modern, results-based approach to management and was mindful of the prerogative of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to translate legislative mandates into work programmes and activities, including publications.

57. The representative of the **United States of America** said her country attached particular importance to three aspects of the review of publications policy. The first was the use of modern technology, including an upgrading of the capacity of the secretariat to disseminate publications through the Internet. The second was the monitoring of publications by member States through semi-annual meetings between the secretariat's Publications Committee and the Working Party. The third was the principle that publications should be an activity driven by member States. She recognized the importance and the value of many UNCTAD publications to member States, including her own Government. She congratulated UNCTAD for the high degree of scrutiny given to its publications, but emphasized that more effort could be made to improve further.

58. The spokesperson for the **African Group** (Morocco) recognized the importance of publications for an organization such as UNCTAD, not least as a tool to disseminate its research results. Publication activities were the prerogative of the Secretary-General, and the secretariat had established the necessary monitoring and control mechanisms, with which his Group was very satisfied. The role of member States was to provide guidelines for the planning, production and dissemination of publications, and then to assess, after their issue, whether publications were in conformity with the guidelines. On planning, it was the prerogative of the secretariat to set the priorities and propose the plan, whereas member States were to monitor whether this plan was consistent with the work programme. The latter was done not only by the Working Party but also through other competent expert bodies in New York. On production, the role of member States was to monitor the quality of publications, not the quantity. With regard to dissemination, the issue of languages was crucial to the African Group, and he did not understand why many UNCTAD studies were still published only in English. Ways and means must be explored to solve this problem, for example by using such methods as co-publication. UNCTAD's publications deserved a more widespread distribution to universities and libraries. He believed that modern technology could be a useful means to disseminate publications but stressed the need to bear in mind that not all countries had full access to such technology. On assessment, he stressed that weight should be given to the opinion of direct users in improving the quality of publications, thereby increasing their impact.

59. The spokesperson for the **Latin American and Caribbean Group** (Brazil) commended the secretariat's efforts to update its publications policy. She confirmed the official position of the Group, which had been stated at the

sixteenth executive session of the Board. She reiterated the importance the Group attached to the need to concentrate efforts on: improving the quality of publications, as opposed to the compulsive reduction of publications; exploring ways and means to improve publication activities, such as through co-publication or the use of modern technology; and identifying savings resulting from the rationalization of publications, which should be used to improve the quality of publications in order to meet the needs of users. She also stressed the importance of publishing in all languages.

60. The representative of **China** said that UNCTAD had a mandate to undertake an integrated treatment of development issues in such areas as trade, investment and technology. Publications which contained studies and analysis in these areas were therefore part and parcel of UNCTAD's work and should not be constrained. There were mechanisms such as the Working Party in which member States could monitor the implementation of the policy, and member States should not to go into micro management of publications, but should leave it to the secretariat. He recognized that UNCTAD had established a publications policy and the appropriate machinery for its implementation. He noted that some of the results of UNCTAD's analytical work were forward-looking and unique in their views, but seldom got the attention of the public at large. He therefore encouraged the secretariat to ensure that UNCTAD's analysis featured more prominently in the media so that wider dissemination could increase its impact. He emphasized that the publications programme should evolve as the world evolved, and the list of publications should be adjusted accordingly.

61. The representative of **Uganda** said that UNCTAD should strive to be a centre of excellence on development issues, and its primary role was in consensus-building. In this context, he stressed that the effort to avoid duplication must not lead to the suppression of different views. Informing member States of developments through publications was also an important role of UNCTAD. He stressed the importance of assessment in improving the quality of publications. If a survey of target readership provided inconclusive results, for example, it might be indicative of a need to review the distribution methods or the language availability.

62. The representative of **Switzerland** said that the report on documentation and publications formed a good basis for discussion. His country recognized the importance of publications for an analytical organization such as UNCTAD, and the dramatic decrease in the number of publications in the current biennium must have been achieved through a serious review process. He attached importance to readership surveys, and the need to have them well planned and structured. He regretted the shortness of the time allowed for the ex-post survey of 1997 publications, which might have been responsible for the disappointing results. Member States should be more involved in assessing publications, and the secretariat's Publications Committee could establish a working relationship with the Working Party to exercise quality control.

63. The representative of **Sweden** said that the goal should be to strive to make UNCTAD's publications cost-effective with a demonstrable impact, and it should not necessarily be either to keep all presently produced publications or to discontinue them. Statements to the effect that no changes were possible could not be accepted. At times, his delegation sensed a lack of will to focus on the most basic goal of UNCTAD publications, which was to enhance the economic progress of developing countries through improved and more prosperous trade. There was a need for an effective mechanism to prioritize publications and to ascertain their relevance. Publications should be produced only to fulfil real expressed needs within the framework of UNCTAD work programmes, and they should therefore be demand-driven. A specific target audience should be identified for

each publication, and distribution should be based on demand. Feedback was essential, and member States must be fully involved in a transparent process to ensure that their needs were met. Information should be provided on that basis for the production of publications other than parliamentary documentation, on the extent to which publications reflected requests from member States, and on the findings of the Publications Committee and the Flagship Report Review Panel.

64. The representative of the **United Kingdom** stressed the need for member States to be more involved in the application of the publications policy, as well as for publications to be more responsive to the concerns of member States. He was disappointed at the low rate of reply for the survey on 1997 publications. He considered that readership surveys should be conducted routinely, but the methodology could be improved, for example by narrowing the target samples geographically or sectorally. He proposed to have consultants undertake this exercise. He could not agree with the view that demand-based criteria should not be used to cut the number of publications. He considered that demand should be the criterion for both increases and reductions in publications. He concluded that member States should be more fully involved in shaping the publications programme on a more regular basis.

65. The representative of **Norway** recognized the efforts undertaken by the secretariat to review the publications policy of UNCTAD, including the specific proposals made in the secretariat's report. He stressed that publications should serve concrete needs of member States and be cost-effective, and that demand should be the determining criterion. He urged the secretariat to make concrete proposals for streamlining, for example by combining several studies into one overall volume. He proposed the establishment of a linkage between the secretariat's Publications Committee and member States, for example the Working Party. There were examples in other organizations, such as the Economic Commission for Europe, where member States were involved in creating or abolishing publications.

66. The representative of **France** expressed disappointment with the low rate of reply for the survey of 1997 publications and wondered whether this was due to deficient methodology or whether those member States which had not replied were generally satisfied with the publications. He proposed that the secretariat invest more resources into the holding of such surveys, but disagreed with hiring consultants for this purpose. He stressed the importance of the usefulness of publications as a criterion for judging their value. This was more important than their academic quality. He also stressed the importance of ensuring that publications were available in the various languages. He noted the steady improvement in UNCTAD's Internet site, as well as the recent expansion of the French page, which was now closer to the English site in terms of content and updating, although some important elements, such as the DMFAS page or the page of the Special Coordinator for LDCs, had not yet been included. The secretariat should be congratulated and encouraged to pursue its efforts.

67. The representative of the **United States of America** proposed considering converting the "savings" resulting from reduced use of UNCTAD conference services into increased translation services, since both services were under the responsibility of UNOG.

68. The **Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD**, referring to the process of deciding what should be published and how member States could be involved in this process, explained that the proposed publications programme was a part of the programme budget, on which member States had the opportunity to conduct intensive debate and to make final decisions in the Working Party and later in the Committee on Programme Coordination and in the Fifth Committee of the

General Assembly. In addition, member States had had an opportunity to express views, particularly through their experts in capitals, prior to this process in the form of the *ex ante* survey. Further, a detailed report on the implementation of the programme of work, including publications, was made by the secretariat at the end of each biennium to Headquarters, and subsequently programme implementation was reported to the General Assembly. While the publications programme was thus discussed and approved by member States in the context of establishing the programme budget, the programme might contain some generic titles, and the Secretary-General of UNCTAD then decided the specific title later on at the executing stage of the programme. The question was therefore how to reflect the views of member States in the execution of the programme, as there had not been a functioning mechanism for this purpose. He proposed, for example, that division directors propose and discuss with member States concrete titles of publications to be issued every year. In this way, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD would retain his prerogative to implement the programme, while member States would be able to ensure that implementation would be in conformity with the agreed publications programme.

69. The spokesperson for the **Asian Group** (Bangladesh), reaffirmed that UNCTAD publications policy must conform to the policy established by the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The report on documentation and publication formed a good basis for member States to review the policy, and he was encouraged by the guiding principles and objectives laid out therein. Publications were an important aspect of UNCTAD's work and an indispensable tool to service its main clients, which were developing countries, particularly the least developed ones. Moreover, publications served as an effective component of UNCTAD's role in conducting analytical work. UNCTAD had in place a very coherent system characterized by planning, scrutiny and learning from experience, and he was encouraged by the progress made in implementing various recommendations in the report. He felt assured that UNCTAD had effective mechanisms for overseeing the implementation of the publications programme and for developing new innovations, namely the Publications Committee, the Flagship Report Review Panel and the supervisory mechanisms for policy clearance. He considered that there was no need for any other mechanisms for member States to further micro-manage the managerial prerogative of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. He was encouraged by the working relationship between UNCTAD and UNOG, and looked forward to proposals on how to reinvest sales revenue from UNCTAD in its own publications programme. He noted the usefulness of Internet dissemination, and looked forward to electronic dissemination in all the official languages. He cautioned, however, that electronic dissemination must not replace distribution in printed form. On assessment, he attached importance to the use of the readership survey, which demonstrated the high regard attached to UNCTAD publications by experts in capitals of both developed and developing countries. He cautioned, however, that, given the low rate of reply due in large part to the shortness of time, these surveys should not be used as the sole yardstick in determining the usefulness of each publication. He also expressed reservations about using market-based information as an indication of the value of publications, as it would not reflect properly the usefulness of publications for experts in many developing countries. He encouraged the secretariat to coordinate with member States in compiling the relevant data, statistics and factual information to be utilized by the secretariat in its analysis. UNCTAD's views on development issues should be disseminated more prominently in the media, and he therefore attached importance to such publications as discussion papers and newsletters. He expressed concern over the sizable reduction in UNCTAD publications, and encouraged the secretariat to come up with new proposals for publications in line with evolving economic environment and development issues.

70. The representative of **Norway**, responding to the statement made by the Deputy Secretary-General, considered the value of readership surveys limited due to the low response rates. He also viewed the influence of the Working Party on the programme budget as limited. There should be a stronger mechanism for interaction between member States and the secretariat in the development of the publications programme prior to the programme budget discussion of the Working Party.

71. The representative of **Morocco** expressed his full support for the process described by the Deputy Secretary-General. He considered that there were sufficient mechanisms for programming publications and monitoring implementation. The role of the Working Party was to assist the Secretary-General in the programming aspect. He emphasized that, moreover, publications were and should be discussed substantively by the Commissions and the Board. He doubted whether the Working Party could make a more substantive contribution than these bodies other than through its own activities in the framework of its consideration of the programme budget.

72. The representative of **Chile** expressed his satisfaction with the approach to publications policy adopted by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. He cautioned that readership surveys should not be the sole basis for the elimination of publications, and reiterated that the quality aspect should be more important.

73. The representative of the **United Kingdom** said that the purpose of readership surveys should not be the elimination of publications. The aim of the mechanisms being proposed was for member States to be involved in ensuring that publications reflected real needs, and not to micro-manage. Member States were not aiming to control the editorial aspects of publications, but to ensure that UNCTAD's recognized analytical capacity would be utilized to the full and to ensure that UNCTAD's messages reached the target audience in a clear and coherent manner. He agreed with the approach proposed by the secretariat whereby, at the beginning of each year, division heads would brief delegations on the specific publications envisaged for that year.

74. The **Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD**, referring to the response rate to the surveys, said that 16 replies were too few, while 43 replies represented a good sample but fell short of being a basis for judgement on the usefulness of publications. He reiterated that the main thrust of his proposal was to consult member States on the draft publications programme in the autumn before its finalization and, early each year, to have division directors brief member States on concrete titles of publications to be issued during that year.

Action by the Working Party

75. The Working Party had before it a draft decision submitted by the Vice-Chairman.

76. The **Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD** noted that paragraph 3(c) of the draft decision stated that the Working Party would report to the Trade and Development Board which would, in turn, endorse the recommendations to be transmitted to the General Assembly's review bodies. In that connection, it should be noted that this did not imply any obligation on the part of the Board to endorse recommendations of the Working Party, which was a subsidiary body of the Board. It would always be for the Board to decide what it wished to endorse or not.

77. At its 126th plenary meeting, on 8 May 1998, the Working Party adopted a decision containing a draft decision for adoption by the Trade and Development Board. (For the text of the decision, see annex I.)

Chapter III

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Opening of the session

78. The thirty-first session of the Working Party was opened on 4 May 1998 by Mr. Petko Baev (Bulgaria), Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur of the Working Party at its thirtieth session.

B. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

79. At its 124th (opening) plenary meeting, on 4 May 1998, the Working Party elected Mr. Porfirio Thierry Muñoz-Ledo (Mexico) as its Chairman and Mr. Philippe Merlin (France) as its Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

80. Also at its 124th plenary meeting, the Working Party adopted the provisional agenda for its thirty-first session (TD/B/WP/106). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Savings resulting from the improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the Conference
4. UNCTAD's publication policy
5. Provisional agenda for the thirty-second session of the Working Party
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

D. Provisional agenda for the thirty-second session of the Working Party

(Agenda item 5)

81. At the closing plenary meeting of the thirty-first session (126th plenary meeting), on 8 May 1998, the Working Party approved the provisional agenda for its thirty-second session (see Annex III).

82. In this connection, it was informed that, following the cycle of rotation for its officers since UNCTAD IX, the Chairman at the thirty-second session would be from Group A (Africa) and the Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur from the Latin American and Caribbean Group.

E. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

(Agenda item 7)

83. At the same meeting, the Working Party adopted its draft report, subject to amendments received from delegations to summaries of statements, and authorized the Rapporteur to finalize its report after the close of the session.

ANNEXES

Annex I

TEXTS ADOPTED BY THE WORKING PARTY AT ITS THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

A. Savings resulting from the improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the Conference

1. Conclusions of the Working Party on the review of the resource situation, including savings, in the 1996-1997 biennium

1. The Working Party expressed disappointment over the lack of clear information concerning the savings achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the Conference, including the restructuring of UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the UNCTAD secretariat. It regretted that, as a result of such lack of information, it was not in a position to determine the exact amount of savings achieved, as required of it under the terms of paragraph 107 (a) of "A Partnership for Growth and Development". Nor, in consequence of the lack of information, was it able to respond as effectively as it would have wished to the request contained in paragraph 54 of General Assembly resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997.

2. Nevertheless, the Working Party considered that significant savings had been achieved by UNCTAD as a direct result of decisions of the ninth session of the Conference and the reform of the UNCTAD secretariat. It affirmed its conviction that a proportion of the reduced level of expenditure in UNCTAD's budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (i.e. $7.7 million, as indicated in para. 6 of the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations) was directly attributable to improved overall cost effectiveness achieved as a result of the decisions taken at UNCTAD IX, in particular through the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the UNCTAD secretariat.

3. It noted that considerable savings had been achieved as a result of reductions in conference servicing requirements attributable to the restructuring of UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery, but noted the statement in paragraph 8 of the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations that: "Such 'savings' as might have been realized in connection with this were either absorbed in servicing other offices or were surrendered at the close of the biennium." It strongly recommended that consideration should be given to allocating a percentage of the total savings achieved to the financing of UNCTAD activities within the current biennium.

2. Conclusions of the Working Party on the proposals for allocation of $5.5 million pursuant to General Assembly decision 52/462 of 28 March 1998

4. The Working Party adopted an agreed statement by the Chairman (for the text of the agreed statement, see the appendix).

5. The Working Party decided to propose a number of adjustments to the Secretary-General's proposals (for the proposed adjustments, see section 3 below).

6. The Working Party authorized the Chairman to summarize its comments on the Secretary-General's proposals and decided to include the Chairman's summary in its report.

3. Proposed adjustments to the Secretary-General's proposals

7. The following adjustments are proposed to part II of the Secretary-General's report:

Policy-making organs:

(a) Under paragraph 15, concerning preparations for UNCTAD X, it is proposed to **reduce** the allocation provided for by $60,000. The total allocation under this item would therefore be $81,000;

EDM:

(b) Under paragraph 16, on evaluation, it is proposed to **increase** the allocation by $100,000.

Subprogramme 1:

(c) Under paragraph 17(i), on development financing, it is proposed to **reduce** the allocation by $150,000;

(d) Under paragraph 17(ii) on portfolio investment, it is proposed to **cancel** the activities (reduction by $100,000);

(e) In connection with debt management, it is proposed to **introduce new activities** for a total allocation of $120,000.

Subprogramme 2:

(f) Under paragraph 20(i), on investment issues/WIR, it is proposed to **reduce** the allocation by half (reduction of $120,000);

(g) Under paragraph 20(ii), on hearings, it is proposed to **cancel** the activity (reduction by $50,000);

(h) In connection with investment policy reviews, it is proposed to **introduce** 4 IPRs, for a total allocation of $280,000;

Subprogramme 5:

(i) Under paragraph 29, it is proposed to **introduce** follow-up to the High-level Meeting on Least Developed Countries' Trade Development, for a total of $360,000.

Regular programme of technical cooperation:

(j) Under paragraph 33(i), on the course on commercial diplomacy, it is proposed to **reduce** by $240,500;

(k) Under paragraph 33(ii), on advice on trade efficiency issues, it is proposed to **reduce** by $240,500;

(l) Under paragraph 33 (iii), on advice for LDCs, it is proposed to **increase** the allocation by $160,000 for the follow-up to the High-level Meeting on LDCs' Trade Development;

(m) Under paragraph 33 (iv), it is proposed to **reduce** the allocation for group training by $59,000.

In summary:

Total increase	$1,020,000	proposed for evaluation, debt management, investment policy reviews, LDCs, LDCs in regular progamme of technical cooperation
Total decrease	$1,020,000	proposed for UNCTAD X, financing for development cooperation, portfolio investment, investment (WIR), hearings, regular programme of technical cooperation/ commercial diplomacy course/ advice on trade efficiency/group training

Table 1: Adjustment proposals of the Working Party to the Secretary-General's report

Paragraph	Description	Present allocation US $	Proposed adjustments US $	Revised allocation US $
13	Experts financing (under review) *	1,088,000.00	0.00	1,088,000.00
	Sub-total PMD	*1,088,000.00*	*0.00*	*1,088,000.00*
15	UNCTAD X preparations	141,000.00	(60,000.00)	81,000.00
16	Evaluation	100,000.00	100,000.00	200,000.00
	Sub-total EDM	*241,000.00*	*40,000.00*	*281,000.00*
17 (i)	Finance for development	450,000.00	(150,000.00)	300,000.00
17 (ii)	Portfolio investment	100,000.00	(100,000.00)	0.00
17 (iii)	Improving connectivity	150,000.00		150,000.00
17(iv)	South-South Conference	60,000.00		60,000.00
NEW	Debt management	0.00	120,000.00	120,000.00
	Sub-total Subprogramme 1	*760,000.00*	*(130,000.00)*	*630,000.00*
20 (I)	Investment issues	240,000.00	(120,000.00)	120,000.00
20 (ii)	Hearings on possible MFI	50,000.00	(50,000.00)	0.00
20 (iii)	Development of accounting module small-medium enterpr.	20,000.00		20,000.00
20 (iv)	Development of agri-business component	50,000.00		50,000.00
NEW	Investment policy reviews (4)	0.00	280,000.00	280,000.00
	Sub-total Subprogramme 2	*360,000.00*	*110,000.00*	*470,000.00*
23 (I)	Build capacity for positive agenda for future trade negotiations	590,000.00	0.00	590,000.00
23 (ii)	Training for settlement of disputes in intern. trade and investment	30,000.00	0.00	30,000.00
23 (iii)	Small island developing countries	60,000.00	0.00	60,000.00
	Sub-total Subprogramme 3	*680,000.00*	*0.00*	*680,000.00*
26 (I)	Customs	180,000.00	0.00	180,000.00
26 (ii)	Trade Points	135,000.00	0.00	135,000.00
26 (iii)	TRAINFORTRADE	135,000.00	0.00	135,000.00
26 (v)	Land-locked - Review of transit agreements	60,000.00	0.00	60,000.00
	Sub-total Subprogramme 4	*510,000.00*	*0.00*	*510,000.00*
29	Preparations for Third UN Conference on LDCs	340,000.00	0.00	340,000.00
NEW	Follow-up to High-Level Meeting	0.00	360,000.00	360,000.00
	Sub-total Subprogramme 5	*340,000.00*	*360,000.00*	*700,000.00*
	SUB-TOTAL REGULAR BUDGET COMPONENTS	**3,979,000.00**	**380,000.00**	**4,359,000.00**
33 (I)	Commercial diplomacy	450,000.00	(240,500.00)	209,500.00
33 (ii)	Advice on services infrastructure & trade efficiency issues	450,000.00	(240,500.00)	209,500.00
33 (iii)	Advise LDCs on implementation of integr. framework for technical as	450,000.00	160,000.00	610,000.00
33 (iv)	Group training, various areas	200,000.00	(59,000.00)	141,000.00
	SUB-TOTAL REGULAR PROG. TECHNICAL COOPERATION	**1,550,000.00**	**(380,000.00)**	**1,170,000.00**
	TOTAL PROPOSED ALLOCATION *	**5,529,000.00**	**0.00**	**5,529,000.00**

*NB. Subject to future disbursement modalities

Appendix

Agreed statement by the Chairman of the Working Party

The members of the Working Party considered the proposals of the Secretary-General contained in paragraphs 12 and 13 of document UNCTAD/ISS/Misc.121, and agreed to recommend the financing of experts on the understanding that:

1. It would only involve one-time expenditure within the framework of the 1998-1999 biennium made possible because of extra resources that have been allocated as a result of underspending;

2. It would not set a precedent regarding the financing from UNCTAD's regular budget of the expenses of experts attending, in their personal capacity, expert meetings convened by the Commissions in accordance with paragraph 114 of "A Partnership for Growth and Development";

3. Special consideration would be given to the needs of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries;

4. The President of the Board is requested to undertake informal consultations, with the involvement of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and to be completed by 3 July 1998, on the establishment of guidelines and modalities, to be endorsed by the Board at its eighteenth executive session on 10 July 1998, for the distribution of the relevant funds.

B. UNCTAD's publication policy

The Working Party recommends that the Trade and Development Board, at its seventeenth executive session, adopt the following draft decision agreed by the members of the Working Party during its thirty-first session:

"The Trade and Development Board, taking into account the ongoing work in the secretariat to streamline UNCTAD's publications policy, the relevant reports, and the establishment of a Publications Committee within the secretariat, agrees that:

1. The efforts undertaken by the secretariat in this respect are most welcome; the Board also takes note of the Working Party's satisfaction with the mechanisms put in place within the secretariat to ensure the systematic oversight and improvement of UNCTAD's publications activities;

2. Member States be encouraged to take an active part in a transparent review of UNCTAD's publications policy through consultations between the member States and the secretariat, so as to ensure that publications meet their needs and fulfil the priorities set for UNCTAD;

3. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD be invited to hold meetings with member States regarding UNCTAD's publications policy at an appropriate stage of the planning and review process, as follows:

(a) The Working Party will, at the start of each year, meet informally with UNCTAD's programme managers to discuss the specific list of publications planned for the year; at the same time, the Working Party will also consider a report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of UNCTAD's publications policy and will report to the Trade and Development Board; the two meetings will not exceed two days altogether;

(b) In the autumn of the first year of each biennium, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD will meet informally with the members of the Working Party to discuss a draft list of publications proposed for the next biennium;

(c) The Working Party will review the draft work programme early in the following year, including the draft list of proposed publications, after which the Secretary-General of UNCTAD will finalize his programme budget submission to the Secretary-General of the United Nations; the Working Party will review the proposed programme budget at the time it is submitted to the General Assembly and will report to the Trade and Development Board which, in turn, will endorse the recommendations to be transmitted to the General Assembly's review bodies;

(d) The Working Party will also review the results of a survey of publications issued during the previous year, as well as any in-depth readership surveys of selected publications which will have been conducted; readership surveys should be conducted on an annual basis; in the light of recent experience, the secretariat should seek to improve the design, methodology and scope of readership surveys so that they fulfil their crucial role;

(e) All member States are encouraged to respond as fully as possible to readership surveys."

Annex II

CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY OF COMMENTS OF THE WORKING PARTY ON THE PROPOSALS FOR ALLOCATION OF $5.5 MILLION PURSUANT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECISION 52/462 OF 28 MARCH 1998

1. The Working Party expressed concern that the draft report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations had been provided to the Working Party at such a late stage and that - contrary to the requirements of General Assembly resolution 52/220 - the Working Party had not been consulted in the preparation of the report. Many members considered that proposals for allocation should have focused on a limited number of priorities in order to ensure that the additional funds had a real impact. They considered that priority should be given to least developed countries, and it was also suggested that more attention should be paid to cross-sectoral concerns. Most members considered that the proposals involved excessive use of consultants. For its deliberations, the Working Party had before it written proposals submitted by some members of the Working Party.

Policy-making organs: $1,229,000

(a) Expert Meetings of the Commissions (paragraphs 12 and 13)

2. The Working Party adopted an agreed statement by the Chairman on the financing of experts, which is reproduced in an annex (see annex I above).

(b) Preparations for UNCTAD X (paragraphs 14 and 15)

3. The proposal to organize four brainstorming meetings was welcomed by some delegations as a way to focus on a broad range of development issues in the context of UNCTAD IX. However, others questioned the value of such meetings and thought that the preparations for the next Conference should be financed from existing resources; others thought that the money would be better spent on other priorities.

Executive Direction and Management: $100,000 (paragraph 16)

4. There was agreement on the principle of having independent expert evaluations of technical cooperation programmes, and it was agreed that the minimum amount allocated to those projects should be $100,000. Any higher amount would be met from the budget for consultants.

Subprogramme 1. Globalization and development: $760,000 (paragraphs 17-19)

5. There was support for subparagraphs (iii) and (iv) and for the inclusion of a new subparagraph on debt management. Reaction to subparagraphs (i) and (ii) was mixed: in particular, concerns were expressed about possible duplication with the work of other international organizations involved in development (subpara. (i)) and portfolio investment (subpara. (ii)). There was general agreement on improving the information technology capacity of UNCTAD, but clarification was sought on UNCTAD's overall strategy in this area, particularly on the choice of Lotus Notes.

Subprogramme 2. Investment, enterprise, development and technology: $360,000 (paragraphs 20-22)

6. It was generally agreed that the amount proposed was not high enough in relation to the importance of subprogramme 2 and the amounts allocated to other subprogrammes. While some delegates welcomed the proposal to hold hearings on a possible multilateral framework for investment, some thought that regional seminars or symposia would be more appropriate, and others were worried about duplicating the work of other international bodies. Some delegates thought that the output under item (i), on investment issues, was meagre in relation to the resources it was proposed to allocate to it. It was suggested that a training element should be included in the proposals, and that some funding should be directed towards investment policy reviews and science, technology and innovation policy reviews.

Subprogramme 3. International trade in goods and services and commodities: $680,000 (paragraphs 23-25)

7. There was support for the proposals under subprogramme 3. It was stressed that UNCTAD's role was to enable countries to set their own development agenda. Negotiations on agriculture and training were seen as important areas, but some concerns were expressed about the scope of the proposed activities relating to the settlement of disputes and trade negotiations. It was suggested that the subprogramme's activities should be extended to benefit landlocked as well as small island developing countries.

Subprogramme 4. Services infrastructure for development and trade efficiency: $510,000 (paragraphs 26-27)

8. There was broad agreement on the proposals under this subprogramme and on the usefulness of Trade Points in particular. Concerns were expressed on the need to hire highly qualified technicians (para. 27 (b)), and on allocating funds to programmes before the results of evaluations of their activities were known. One of the priorities of the subprogramme should be electronic commerce, and activities should benefit the least developed, landlocked, island and transit developing countries. It was understood that money allocated to ASYCUDA would not prejudice future arrangements to recover the costs associated with the programme.

Subprogramme 5. Office of the Special Coordinator for the Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries: $340,000 (paragraphs 29-30)

9. The proposals to enhance the activities of the Office of the Special Coordinator were welcomed. Several delegates thought that there should be more activities to follow up the High-Level Meeting on Integrated Initiatives for LDCs' Trade Development, and some favoured increasing the amount allocated to the subprogramme.

Regular programme of technical cooperation: $1,550,000 (paragraphs 31-35)

10. There was support for strengthening the programme, especially in implementing the Integrated Framework for Technical Cooperation (para. 33 (iii)). However, the proposed level and distribution of resources was questioned; attention was drawn, in particular, to the high cost of hiring three inter-regional advisors at the L-6 level. Attention was drawn to the importance of action-oriented programmes such as the ITC/UNCTAD/WTO joint Africa programme.

Annex III

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE THIRTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY

1. Election of officers

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

3. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing

4. Evaluation of technical cooperation programmes: In-depth study on the Trade Point Programme

5. Provisional agenda for the thirty-third session of the Working Party

6. Other business

7. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board.

Annex IV

ATTENDANCE */

1. The following States members of UNCTAD, members of the Working Party, were represented at the session:

Bangladesh
Brazil
China
Ethiopia
France
Indonesia
Ireland
Japan
Kenya
Mexico
Morocco
Norway
Pakistan
Russian Federation
Slovakia
Sweden
United States of America
Uruguay

2. The following States members of UNCTAD, not members of the Working Party, were represented as observers at the session:

Argentina
Australia
Austria
Belarus
Bulgaria
Canada
Chile
Costa Rica
Ecuador
Egypt
Germany
Guatemala
India
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Italy
Jamaica
Lebanon
Luxembourg
Madagascar
Malaysia
Mauritius
Nigeria
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Republic of Korea
Senegal
South Africa
Spain
Sudan
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Uganda
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Venezuela
Yemen
Zambia

3. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

European Community
League of Arab States
Organization of the Islamic Conference
Organization of African Unity

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*/ For the list of participants, see TD/B/WP/INF.38.

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